



## JONES COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH

### POLICY STATEMENT: FUNDING THE NATURAL RESOURCE AND OUTDOOR RECREATION TRUST FUND

Iowans of all ages and abilities enjoy better health and well-being when being surrounded by nature. Whether it's living near lakes and streams, forests and greenways, or parks and trails, our connectedness to the outdoors is vital to Iowa's public health. As the governing arm of Jones County Public Health, the Jones County Board of Health members strongly support the advancement of Iowa's Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund and encourage our state legislature to enact the 3/8<sup>th</sup> cent sales tax to fund the Trust. This small increase is overwhelmingly supported by nearly 70 percent of Iowans across the state. Beyond the economic capital growth, tourism sales, and conservation benefits the Trust Fund will provide to our State, the broad public health implications and the importance of ensuring our children and future generations of Iowans have a healthy community to grow up in is more important than ever.

Today, nearly one in every five children in Iowa is classified as obese. In addition, chronic conditions like Type 2 Diabetes, early on-set high blood pressure, metabolic syndrome, and even some cancers are popping up in our children at younger and younger ages in correlation to their unhealthy weights. But thanks to Iowan's support of the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust, we have the opportunity to redirect the course of our children and provide a thriving environment that supports their health and well-being.

The preservation and investment to protect Iowa's green spaces, water, and air quality can be keys to improving the health of current and future Iowans.

- A child's risk for obesity can increase by as much as 60 percent if they live in a neighborhood without parks, sidewalks, and other green space or recreational amenities.
- Children living in neighborhoods with easy access to outdoor recreation and green space have a higher likelihood of being physically active, achieve better grades in school, and require less disciplinary intervention.
- Nebraska reported a \$3 return on investment in direct health cost savings for every \$1 invested into trail infrastructure.
- Numerous studies prove separation from nature is detrimental to one's physical health and mental well-being.

For these public health concerns and so many more, the Jones County Board of Health members encourage the 2019 Iowa Legislature to take a strong and swift approach to passing the 3/8<sup>th</sup> cent sales tax to fund Iowa's Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust and honor their commitment to the great constituents they serve across Iowa. What better legacy could the 2019 Iowa Legislature leave, than to ensure Iowa's most precious natural resources are preserved and advanced under their leadership?

Jones County Board of Health Members

Lyle Theisen, Chair  
Dennis Coon  
Kirk Kilburg, M.D.

Jane Ortgies, RN, Vice-Chair  
Wayne Manternach

*Adopted January 2019*